



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

FROM ARCADIA TO AVERNUS.



WAS riding alone over an immense prairie. I felt like one solitary in the midst of ocean, but more glad and exulting in spirit. It was the afternoon of a June day; the sky was of fathomless blue; the air cool and brilliant, transfused with sunshine, as the soul of a lover is transfused with the presence of her he loves. The iridescent flowers of this great natural garden through which I rode, gave out dreamy and voluptuous perfumes. There was no sound save the low sigh of the wind in the grass, and the muffled tread of my slow-stepping steed.

I was thrilled with a glow of sensuous life, as well as touched with a yearning after the infinite and unattainable. Afar off, I saw a herd of bisons basking in the sunshine. They were but a picture upon the camera of my soul.

Hunter as I was, with knife in my girdle, and rifle upon my shoulder, this dark cloud of uncouth creatures was to me only a part of the landscape—they awakened none of the usual eager impulse of pursuit. It was enough, upon that delicious day, to feel the pulses of life beating with a soft shock of pleasure against the shores of my heart. I wandered on, unmindful whither, although prudence dictated my return to camp. I was out with a hunting-party of regular Western foresters, who had admitted me, by special courtesy, to make one of their number. These usually have a profound contempt for all amateur sportsmen; but I had shown myself so earnest, and, withal, not wanting in actual rough experience, that they gave me welcome. We had now been for six weeks beyond the borders of civilization, hunting the bear and buffalo, and not without a skirmish with Indians; though these were usually friendly to my nearly as savage associates.

The previous day I had wandered off alone, and passed the night solitary in the woods, not being afraid but that I could find my way back to camp. I had three day's provisions in the bag slung over my saddle, plenty of shot and powder, a revolver, as well as a rifle, a matchless steed, and no fear of living thing. I was, then, in no especial haste to get back to the rendezvous.

Still, I reflected that my friends might be anxious, and two or three times I half turned my horse's head; but neither he nor I were much inclined, to tell the truth, to obey the prompting of my vacillating hand. Suddenly I drew the bridle, and we came to a full pause.

"I am going after something important—I do not know what, neither why nor wherefore. To-day is a crisis in my life," I spoke aloud. "Is it for good or bad? Events only can decide. Gray Eagle, I leave the way to your wisdom. Choose your own path. I will not direct you."

The horse, who, on account of his peerless swiftness and strength, as well as his color, had been named by the hunters Gray Eagle, pricked up his ears, half wheeled about, and started on at an easy gallop, for all the world as though he understood every word I had spoken. I certainly felt no presentiment of evil. I was in a mood when I could apprehend no bad thing. Never before had I so completely realized the mingled physical and spiritual pleasure of existence. I had dreamed upon the bosom of the Nile, reclined beneath the shadow of the pyramids, written rhymes in Grecian temples, mused upon fragments of Roman columns, seen the sun hang for twenty-four hours, a dull, red ball, over the snows of Northern Europe, as well as sink to his fiery bath, amid the splendors of Italy—but never did I remember so full and exulting a thrill of life as upon that cool, resplendent day of June, upon a Western prairie, with a breeze kissing my cheek, breathing honeyed fragrance, and the light tramp of my horse's hoofs falling only upon flowers.

For an hour and a half, or two hours, Gray Eagle galloped on. A line of hills which had marked the southern verge of the prairie, grew into bold relief. At last he reached their base; they were beautifully wooded, not lofty enough for sublimity, but characterized by verdure and grace. A glittering cascade leaped out of the forest summit of one of the tallest hills into the arms of the sunshine.

Gray Eagle, following the promptings of his own will, ascended the first acclivity, bounded over a narrow ravine, and picked his way around the foot of two or three of the more aspiring mountains, until, upon turning around an abrupt ledge of rocks, he came upon a well-worn path, and I pulled suddenly at his bridle. Astonishment and pleasure thrilled me. I look-

ed down upon as lovely a valley as ever dimpled the swelling bosom of mother earth; and, at this hour, it was as full to the brim, of the golden radiance of sunset, as ever a goblet was of wine. The hills were of a more precipitous character than upon the side I had ascended; great gray patches of rock glowed amid the dense green masses of forest, which formed an irregular, semi-circular wall, sweeping about the north and east of the valley. Close at their base slept a lake, some five or six miles in length, and half that in breadth, which now shone like a sheet of molten gold. The land stretched away from the water evenly, its level broken here and there by picturesque groups of trees and gentle undulations—far beyond the mountainous wall it spread away, and I could see a vista of the most enchanting landscapes, only lost when the eye could trace it no farther.

But, most wonderful of all—and so unaccountable that I passed my hand across my brow to find if I were not the sport of some mirage of the fancy—the banks of this lake were adorned by about a dozen villas, built after the choicest rules of art, and surrounded by parks, flower-gardens, fountains, and summer-houses, bespeaking expensive and fastidious cultivation.

"I will understand this, if I die for it," I cried, giving the rein to my steed, who followed the path which, I could see, led, with some intricate turnings, into the valley.

As I came nearer, I had, here and there, delicious glimpses of the scene I was approaching. The sun sank lower, and the burnished gold of the lake changed to a roseate flush, and, still later, into a silver mirror, reflecting the overhanging rocks and forests. I now distinctly saw two boats full of men and women, rowing or floating about at their leisure upon its bosom, with other groups of people and children upon the banks, and around their door-ways. The sound of sweet music came fitfully up on the breeze—I even heard a woman's laugh, clear and divinely melodious.

Its sweetness seemed to startle even the unhuman heart of my noble horse; he arched his neck proudly, curvetted and danced like a French ballet-girl, and dashed, at an exhilarating pace, down the path, out into the plain. In a few moments we reached the gate-way of the first villa. This building seemed to be something in the style of the old Moorish palaces. Yet

it was hardly Spanish in its architecture, being more lofty, more expressive of imagination, and less of fancy. I had never beheld anything precisely like it, nor knew I in what school to place it; but if it was unique, it was likewise elegant beyond comparison. It stood in the midst of a spacious lawn, carpeted with grass fine and soft as velvet, shaded but not obscured by magnificent native trees. I had glimpses of the lake behind the villa, and of extensive flower-gardens. There was no porter's lodge, probably because none was required in this remote region, where guests could seldom be expected.

I dismounted, and, bidding Gray Eagle remain where he was, I opened the smaller gate, passed through, and walked up the lawn. A gentleman was sitting upon a stately portico which ornamented the side of the villa, who, when he perceived me, arose and advanced to the steps, welcoming me with courtesy.

"I was so surprised by what I saw," I said to him, "so almost bewildered, in fact, that I could not resist the desire to dismount and speak with some of the inhabitants of this marvelous settlement."

"And since you have stumbled upon our little village," he replied, "you must not refuse to spend a night in it. I shall feel proud if you consent to be my guest."

"I have abundant resources for supper and bed alone in the wood, and expected to bivouac by myself to-night; but I will not refuse your hospitality, for my inclination urges me too strongly to accept it," I said.

"Then make yourself comfortable and at home, friend."

My host summoned a servant to care for my horse, while we lingered a few moments upon the portico, making our names known one to the other, and admiring the sunset.

"We will have tea in half-an-hour," he said presently. "I will show you your room now, if you wish."

I was about to accept, when my eye was caught by a group of young people coming up to the gate, chatting with the gayety of careless hearts. There were maidens and youths, fair to behold, and picturesquely attired. They only paused to leave one of their number within the gate, and passed on, while the girl to whom they had bidden good-night, came leisurely up the avenue, at first not perceiving a stranger. The moment I be-

held her, I knew that it was *her* laugh which had rung through my soul upon the mountain-side. She appeared about seventeen; her form was slender and erect; her dress, of some fine white material, was short as a peasant's garb in front, with a slight train behind, and was simply gathered about the shoulders, with loose sleeves, and a girdle at the waist, from which the skirt fell in ample folds, the whole much after the ancient Greek fashion. She wore no covering upon her head, except a gauzy crimson scarf thrown carelessly over her hair; so that the whole beauty of her countenance flashed upon me at once. To describe that beauty is impossible; it was fair as a flower, pure as heaven, lustrous as light; it was the beauty of exquisite form and color as well as of expression—the expression of a lovely soul, innocent, and unconscious of its own attractions.

"This is my daughter," said the host, as she reached the portico. She gave me her hand in an instant with a passing smile of welcome, paused to give her father a brief account of their boating excursion, and disappeared through the window. I could see the untold pride and fondness with which his glance followed her.

That night when I went to my room at twelve o'clock, I was almost as if I had partaken of *hasheesh*. The mood which had been upon me through the day was heightened by the conversation and events of the evening. At first I had been welcomed simply as a stray guest claiming hospitality. My rough garb and unkempt appearance did not distinguish me from any wild hunter of the West whose associates were bears, horses, and savages; but when I had descended from my apartment as much improved as circumstances admitted of, it was not long before a lively and appreciative interest was established between my host and myself. At table, and during the pleasant hours which followed, with the beautiful child I have mentioned listening earnestly to our conversation, we discussed many topics agreeable to both; among others, the mystery of this cultivated settlement was revealed to me.

A number of wealthy and intellectual families had associated together, and gone West in search of Arcadia. Wearied with the slavery and tasteless monotony of fashionable society, and esteeming that they had within themselves the elements

of pure and unaffected happiness, they resolved upon one of those Utopian experiments which occasionally had been made.

After a wandering and delightful journey of several weeks, they reached this lovely valley which they now occupied, when it was in the flush of glory which crowns the first of June. They decided upon making it their home, after ascertaining that it had the other necessary advantages, as well as unequalled beauty. They found it supplied with unfailing sources of good water, of a soil enriched by the accumulations of centuries, and of a climate moderate and bracing. Moreover, they found in the hill-sides a handsome brown stone in every way suitable for building purposes, sand upon the lake-shore, and choice timber near at hand. There were few Indians in that part of the country, and they were but twenty-five miles from one of the broad tributaries which flow into the Mississippi, and there were settlements above them, to which boats, in the navigable season, made trips as often as twice a month. They could thus send orders to Eastern cities for such supplies as were needed.

So they pitched their tents in the valley and called it Arcady. They brought with them a large body of working-people, many of them with families, who were eager to accept their offer of a free passage to the promising West, in return for a certain amount of labor to be done after arriving there. Among the common artisans they had also architects, master-builders, and artists. These all set to work with the most hearty and united energy; so that elegant homes sprang up, almost as by the waving of Aladdin's lamp. In the meantime, the white tents of the emigrants dotted the emerald plain. The sweet voices of women singing kept time to the merry click of hammers, and gurgles of baby laughter echoed to the gush of the cascade down vine-covered, bee-haunted rocks.

Fine weather and good health favored their enterprise. When the first light snow of December fell they were sheltered in their homes, adorned with the pictures, books, music, and other luxuries and refinements of life which they had brought with them. Their working-people erected themselves temporary abodes, and passed the brief winter in finishing up the slow and finer portions of their task.

The following spring they selected fine

farms on the banks of the river before spoken of, and set up a village for themselves; and were now one of the most thriving and intelligent of young Western settlements. Their services were always to be had when needed; and Arcady kept a courier to make its wants known at the river town, and to carry mails to and from the boats.

Eight years had now passed, and the experiment had stood the test of time. I questioned my host closely of its success—whether lassitude had not crept over them—monotony weighed them down—if a wild yearning for the world they had deserted had not taken possession of them. He affirmed, Neither. He said they had minds among them incapable of slumber: that they feasted upon the splendor of nature, and kept their souls alive with her transcendent beauty. Besides, they labored. They wrote books, painted pictures, composed music, laid out and kept in order extensive gardens, climbed the mountains, rowed boats, fished, taught their children, and occasionally the men went off on grand hunting excursions of several weeks in extent, after bisons, deer, bears, and such royal game as the mighty forests and prairies of the West afford. Their sons and daughters were growing up healthy, beautiful, and intelligent, free from fashionable vices, ignorant of fashionable follies. In that alone, such as were parents had great reward.

As I said, I went to my room, in a state bordering upon mental intoxication. Instead of going to bed, I extinguished the light and sat down in one of the windows. A full moon flooded the room with radiance, which imparted an enchanted glow to the strangely elaborate ceiling and cornices, the couch of state with its lace draperies and silken cover, the flowers glowing like living bouquets upon the white ground of the velvet carpet, and all the accessories of one of the most luxurious sleeping-rooms I had ever entered. Beneath my case-ment was a garden sleeping silently in the perfume of its own breath; I heard the faint murmur of the waves flinging themselves slumberously upon the shore; the lake was just enough rippled to gleam like a shower of diamonds in the lustrous moonlight; beyond it, the hills arose dark and motionless, save where one cascade leaped, like Sappho, from the rock, dashing itself to death upon the heedless plain. The incomparable beauty and tranquillity of the hour, every feature of the landscape, every

article of furniture and ornament of my apartment, are impressed upon my recollection; yet I do not believe that I then thought of any of those things; nor even of what my host had been saying to me, or I to him.

I saw only Morna—Morna, the young daughter of the house. All these were but the light and atmosphere floating about her living image. I saw only her—her face and form, and the soul which they shined, innocent, holy, inquiring—such a soul as, above all, is charming to a worldly-wise man—divinely pure, but bright, intelligent, and questioning, looking with faith and love into the eyes of those from whom it seeks tenderness and knowledge. Those garments of white, floating untrammelled about the form whose every motion was like music—that golden halo of hair streaming about the face—that face itself, so fair in complexion, so exquisite in features—those eyes unconscious of their own divinity! Was it strange that I had gone the world over, and chanced upon Arcady at last, there to meet the first woman who had ever won me to sit up all night and dream of her? For it was not until the golden arrow of light was shot up from behind the eastern hills, that I started, to find myself sitting there.

At that moment came to my mind *the curse*. In my infancy, before any consciousness of evil or good was developed in me, I had been cursed. I was philosophic almost to skepticism; I prided myself upon the towering elevation I had attained, from which I could look down upon the fears, prejudices, bigotries, or morbid fancies of my fellows; yet, at that moment I saw the curser, I heard the imprecation, and I felt like one stricken. The life and color went out of all things, the hasheesh splendor departed, and I flung myself upon my couch almost with a groan.

I had been cursed for the sins of another. My father had deceived my mother by a false marriage. She learned the truth, by chance, when I was but a few weeks old, and in her weak condition the shock was fatal, she withered and died as quickly as any lily torn from its stem. When she ran away with my father she was accompanied by her old nurse, who would neither forsake nor betray her, and who supposed the ceremony legal, as did her mistress. It was this ancient crone, who, standing by the corpse of my fair young child-mother, lifted up her hand before

the destroyer, and cursed both him and me:

“Murderer of the innocent! barren shall your bed be, henceforth and forever. Aye, forever! for this child, the only one you shall ever have born to you, shall never know the holy happiness of taking a wife to his breast, never the joy of receiving into his arms his first-born. Your name and fame shall perish utterly from the face of the earth! See to it, God, who art the Avenger, that it so be! Amen!”

My father turned, with a vain attempt at disregard, and left me to the care of her who had cursed me. With the exception of a small sum which he sent yearly for my humble maintenance, he thenceforth paid no more regard to me than if I were not of his blood, until I had attained my tenth year. In the meantime he had married a wealthy and handsome woman; but she brought him no children. It was in the loneliness of heart which came over him at her death that he sent for me; the natural craving for children felt by one now in the prime of life, as well as a probable very tender memory of my mother, induced him to this. After I once came to him, he centred upon me all his interests. I had every advantage possessed by the sons of the rich; and, being fond of study, I became a scholar from the love of it. After I had attained to manhood, my father died. Finding myself the heir to his great wealth, and with nothing to thwart my inclinations, I traveled over many countries and dabbled in their lore, sometimes spending months in libraries and laboratories; and again, living like an Arab with the Arabians, or basking, like a true child of the sun, beneath the intense skies of the Nile-land. I had been at home over a year, and my thirst for novelty was again upon me, when I decided to satiate my curiosity by spending a season in the open air, sharing the wild life of the Western hunters, and scouring the hills and plains of the Occident. Thus it was I had chanced upon Arcady—thus it was I had beheld Morna, the priceless gem, of which this Arcadian peace and beauty were but the appropriate setting.

I tossed restlessly upon my couch, unable to shake off the depressing effect of a spiritual shadow which usually I would have flung away with a smile. I could not even comfort myself with the consciousness that I, at least, was innocent of any wrong against the love and trust of woman. Usually, in all the pretty aspects

of their little vanities and frivolities, I was indifferent to them; in their higher characters of faithful wives and self-sacrificing mothers, I was reverent and respectful of them. I had never yet asked any woman to be my wife, because I wished the other half of me to possess cultivation, dignity, genius; and with these charms hitherto I had always found associated too little of beauty and guilelessness, or too much of experience, temper, or too flighty and fantastic theories; or, in short, I had never before seen Morna; and this is reason enough, for a soul can meet its true conjugal half but once.

The thought that I had never, by word or deed, injured one of the sex to which *she* belonged, did not suffice to calm my perturbed and suddenly shaken spirits. I was glad when the summons to breakfast came, for I knew that in her presence every unpleasant impression would fade away. And so it was. Not only the high, courtly hospitality of the master of the mansion, but the sweet and serener presence of his wife, aided in exercising all bad influences. But it was in the arch smile which flashed now and then over a sunny young face, in the earnest glance of those eyes, and the sound of that voice, that my soul found perfect rest.

When my host invited me to spend several weeks with the Arcadians, noting for myself the manner of their living, I was not a single instant in deciding to accept the proffered hospitality. I gave one thought to the anxiety of my hunter friends, who would suppose me lost by accident or capture, met Morna's glance resting upon my face for an answer, and said 'yes,' with all my heart.

People of quick discernment and high cultivation, do not stand so much upon letters of introduction, and other formalities, in receiving a stranger into their households. They can read in the eye, upon the face, upon the soul, whether the recommendation be genuine, and they require not the endorsement of O., P. or Q. to their attractions or repulsions. Before a month, I was a friend by all the hearthstones of Arcady. The fact of my being so recently from the great world they had forsaken, acquainted with all its late aspects, and a traveler over so large a portion of it, gave me an interest in the eyes of the inhabitants, which there was nothing to detract from in my quiet manners, and unassuming admiration of themselves. That month to me was like a single day

of summer, which, though long, seems short, because of the voluptuous sweetness of the air, the presence of innumerable flowers, the sparkle of sunshine upon waving forests, and all the life, and perfume, and melody, which steal the senses and the soul together away from the contemplation of the ever-present hour-glass.

Another month passed as rapidly. There were excursions into the mountains, and moonlit sails upon the lake, and wild rides over the plain; but I should have been just as happy without any of these. One sight alone was enough to inspire me beyond the height of any further mortal happiness, and that was the blush which began to steal over the pure brow of Morna when I came into her presence, or addressed her exclusively.

At the end of this second month, I was proposed by my host to the Arcadians, as a member of their society, and a citizen of their village, and was accepted. I had written home for funds, and for confirmation of my own statements concerning my character and history. When these arrived, I could no longer refrain from soliciting my host for permission to address his daughter. I have no doubt he had long since observed the passion which she had inspired, and that, at first, it had troubled him exceedingly. Indeed he said as much, immediately adding, that since it was inevitable that a child's heart could not always remain satisfied with parental love, he knew of no one to whom he would more willingly confide the sacred, inestimable treasure. I marked the quiver of his voice, and the tears in his eyes, and I swore, in my heart, that he should never regret my coming into his family, as far as any voluntary act of mine could determine destiny. He said that I must become his son, and not rob him of his daughter; that I must promise to dwell with the Arcadians, and make my abode in his house; to which I readily consented. Then he laid his hand upon my head and blessed me, out of the fullness of his tenderness for his child; but I heard not his blessing. At that moment I saw the withered arm of an ancient nurse, and heard the curse which precluded my anticipated joy.

"What if she should refuse me!" I muttered, almost blinded by the presence of the shadow.

"Then she will be ours again," replied the father, with a smile. "I will not speak for Morna; men have no right to guess at the secrets of a maiden's heart."

Just then she came out upon the lawn where we had been standing, and as if she felt what we had been saying, that divine glow spread over her face; but she laughed it away with a graceful jest, and the thrill of rapture returned to my veins—in her presence I could not doubt.

There was an island which burned like an emerald in the golden setting of the lake, and thither, the next day, I rowed a little boat in which were only Morna and I. This island was full of natural bowers, overrun by the wild Tartarian honeysuckle, upon which the bees of Hybla might have murmured with pleasure to have feasted, and infested only by humming-birds, butterflies, and "insect lovers of the sun." God seemed to have made the world peculiarly beautiful upon that day, to adorn and enhance our love. I say *our* love, because in that sweet solitude it became ours, by my winning Morna to confess that she shared it.

What cared I, then, in the height of my pride and passion, for the ghost of any ancient and perished curse? I felt that it must be buried forever; and I lifted up my heart for a blessing from the angel mother, who, in the immortal youth of heaven, must sympathize with the happiness of her son.

At last the sun arose upon my marriage day.

It was just a year since I entered the valley of Arcady. The parents of Morna would not consent to any briefer engagement; and I could not fairly urge it, since I was afforded every opportunity of enjoying her society.

The day was one of general rejoicing and festival. All the maidens wore wreaths of white roses in their hair, and the men and matrons had on their choicest garments. The village was like an oriental garden during the Feast of Roses; every column, and arch, and gateway was festooned with flowers; flowers were on the earth, and floating in the air. Even the gray hill-sides were flushed with their June abundance of bloom. Long trails of roses dropped from rock to rock, and swung in the breeze. Every boat upon the lake had its masts garlanded, and a gay silken banner fluttering from the head. The ceremony was not to take place until sunset; but business was suspended for the whole day, and no task permitted, save the gathering of flowers and fruits for the feast.

It was the first wedding that had been announced in Arcady; and the occasion was participated in by all as by one harmonious family.

As for the day itself, it seemed ordered to our wishes. To me it seemed as if the skies had opened and dropped one of the most perfect summer days of Paradise down into the valley; but I was not quite in my sober senses, and it may be that suns have shone, and foliage waved, lakes glittered, birds sang, and roses bloomed, as well before.

In the afternoon I sat in my chamber, and waited for the hour. I was in an inspired state. There were wings to my soul, if not to my body, and I arose to a dizzy height of ecstasy. I allowed my trembling, impassioned imagination to enter the chamber where Morna was attiring herself in bridal robes. I saw her before her mirror, lifting her modest eyes to mark the effect of the bridal veil and robe, flushing and paling to think the beauty reflected there was so soon to be bestowed upon me. I saw them fitting the satin slipper to the foot, the snowy girdle to the waist, the bouquet to the bosom, the wreath to the hair; and I knew that when these were laid aside, Morna would be my wife. I should be permitted to enter the holy bower where her maidenly rest had been taken through sweet, unsullied years, and where my reverent thought had, until now, scarcely dared to linger. I thought of the night—of the morrow—of the years to come through all of which she shall be mine. I arose with an ethereal flush through my frame, for there was a light tap at my door. When I opened it, the virgin train of maidens waited to conduct me to Morna, who stood at the threshold of her apartment looking even more lovely than I had dreamed. A spiritual radiance emanated from her happy face; her eyes met mine for an instant with an expression of faith and confidence. I took her hand, and we walked out into the midst of the festal multitude. The splendor of the sunset hour hallowed everything.

When the white-haired minister of the valley stood forth in his sacred robes, I felt her tremble. At that instant profound stillness fell upon the assembly. It was broken by the clatter of a horse's hoof, by a shout of warning, and a messenger from the other settlement rode into our midst.

"The Indians!" he gasped, half dead with haste; "they surround the valley a thousand strong, and in less than half an

hour they will be upon you! Fly! for God's sake, pause not for anything! There is but one chance for safety, and that is in the mountain path, of which they do not know, and which will shelter your flight for four or five miles, and give you that narrow hope. Fly for our settlement! We are already on the march to defend you, and we have more arms than you!"

"Hush! no screaming; women and children, be brave!" said one, in a tone of authority; and all fled for their horses, parents dragging their children by the hands.

"Marry us, before you stir!" shouted I to the minister, for my brain was on fire with a fearful memory.

"Oh, yes," cried Morna, clasping her hands, "if I am to die, let it be as his wife!" and as she said these words, there was that in her face of intense and overmastering love which a lifetime might not have so fully revealed.

Briefly our hands were joined, and the blessing pronounced. I lifted her in my arms, and ran for Gray Eagle, who could bear us both with ease. My father put my pistols in my hands—he had already found his rifle—I waited to see him and our mother well mounted, and then, a word, and Gray Eagle was off like a bird. He had found the valley by the same path through which we were now to leave it, and he went as before, by intuition; the rest of the party following, helter-skelter, as they best could. We wound about the difficult way for miles, trembling with expectation that we should, at any instant, hear the terrible war-whoop close at our side. At last we were obliged to go out upon the open prairie. Oh, then, how we wished for the cover of the darkness of night; that it were only three hours later! But day still shone inexorable, though the shadows were beginning to fall. Straight for the river we rode, our hearts momentarily growing lighter, as the twilight deepened, without a shout of pursuit.

Looking back, we saw a glare against the sky like that of burning buildings, and a brief time later we could distinguish distant yells of defiance and anger, which soon changed to whoops of triumph, as some of their number detected our retreating party. Our hope now was to reach the forest which skirted the prairie not far away, where the wood and the night together would afford us some protection.

There is no need to describe the horror of that flight of men, women, and children through the forest, and the midnight, for

five and twenty miles. We were obliged to emerge into the open country again before reaching the settlement, and we struggled out upon this, at the first gray of dawn, having been bewildered and entangled in the pathless wood all night.

A large body of Indians emerged from cover at almost the same time, and but a little distance from us. Their horses were fresher than ours, and not so burdened. Already the arrows and bullets whistled about us, when our enemies suddenly wheeled and made off into the shelter of the wood again. They had been surprised by the party of brave men sent out, well armed, from the settlement, and imagining their number much greater than it was, they had retreated.

A few moments more and we were in the village, and our preservers marching on to protect us from farther molestation.

"Morna—my wife, we are saved!" I murmured, as I leaped from my horse with her in my arms. "Look up, and say how glad you are. Why, dearest, are you so weary?"

She did not lift her head, though her arms were clasped tightly about my waist. I lifted it tenderly, and looked—the white garments were stained crimson—an arrow from the hand of one of those devilish savages was quivering in the bosom of her I loved! Morna was dead!

I knew nothing rightly for months after that moment, and when I recovered what was left of my scattered health, I turned away from my mourning friends, fleeing to the uttermost parts of the earth to escape from the memory of the past. At times all seems like a vivid and troubled dream, which has made reality vague for the time being, and as I fly from country to country, I pause sometimes, and ask myself Was there ever a valley of Arcady? Was there ever a Morna who dwelt in this valley of Arcady?

ITALIAN SONNET.

There is no God, the fool in secret said—
There is no God that rules on earth, or sky:
Tear off the band that folds the wretch's head,
That God may burst upon his faithless eye.
Is there no God?—the stars in myriads spread,
If he look up, the blasphemy deny,
Whilst his own features in the mirror read,
Reflect the image of Divinity.
Is there no God?—the stream that silver flows,
The air he breathes, the ground he treads, the trees,
The flowers, the grass, the sands, each wind that
blows,
All speak of God; throughout one voice agrees,
And eloquent his dread existence shows:
Blind to thyself, ah, see him, fool, in these!